

# The Strategy of Containment

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity #1: Understanding Containment

**Directions:** Read the following documents. As you read, answer the questions below.

The following definitions may be helpful as you read:

**Capitalism:** a social and economic system, such as that which exists in the United States and in most of the rest of the western world today, in which the means of production (land and factories, primarily) are owned by private individuals or corporations that are motivated by profit and in competition with one another.

**Socialism:** a social and economic system in which the means of production (land and factories, primarily) are owned by the people as a whole, usually administered by the government. While some socialists (such as Karl Marx—see below) believed that socialism could only come through violent revolution, others argued (and still do) that it can be accomplished through peaceful, democratic means.

**Communism:** a particular form of socialism championed by Karl Marx (1818-1883), who argued that all of human history was the product of struggle between social classes. According to Marx, under capitalism the working class was oppressed by the bourgeoisie (his word for those who owned the means of production). Ultimately, he predicted that the workers would rise up and overthrow the capitalist system, ending the class struggle once and for all and creating a socialist system. Communism was the dominant social and economic system of the Soviet Union.

Question	Answer
Why, according to Clifford, was there little chance of reaching any sort of understanding with the Soviets anytime soon?	
How, according to Clifford, could the United States expect the Soviet Union to behave in international affairs?	

How, in Clifford's view, should the United States respond to this anticipated Soviet behavior?	
According to Clifford, what advantage did the Soviet system of government have over that of American democracy? What did this imply for U.S. foreign policy?	
What did Kennan mean by "containment"? Why did he think it would work?	
Why did Kennan believe that "threats or blustering" would be ineffective in stopping Soviet aggression?	
What did Kennan predict might happen in the Soviet Union if containment were practiced consistently?	

Memorandum from Clark Clifford to President Truman, "American Relations with the Soviet Union," September 24, 1946:

[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-09-24&documentid=4-1&studycollectionid=&pagenumber=1](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-09-24&documentid=4-1&studycollectionid=&pagenumber=1)

[A successful lawyer in St. Louis, **Clark Clifford** (1906-1998) was an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II. In this capacity he frequently advised President Truman, who came to rely on him to the extent that he asked Clifford to accompany him to the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. One of his first assignments in this job was to prepare a report analyzing the postwar behavior of the Soviet Union, and making recommendations as to how the United States should respond. The resulting document—an 81-page report entitled "American Relations with the Soviet Union"—would strongly influence U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War.]

The primary objective of United States policy toward the Soviet Union is to convince Soviet leaders that it is in their interest to participate in a system of world cooperation, that there are no fundamental causes for war between our two nations, and that the security and prosperity of the Soviet Union, and that of the rest of the world as well, is being jeopardized by aggressive militaristic imperialism such as that in which the Soviet Union is now engaged.

However, these same leaders with whom we hope to achieve an understanding on the principles of international peace appear to believe that a war with the United States and the other leading capitalistic nations is inevitable. They are increasing their military power and the sphere of Soviet influence in preparation for the 'inevitable' conflict, and they are trying to weaken and subvert their potential opponents by every means at their disposal. So long as these men adhere to these beliefs, it is highly dangerous to conclude that hope of international peace lies only in 'accord,' 'mutual understanding,' or 'solidarity' with the Soviet Union.

Adoption of such a policy would impel the United States to make sacrifices for the sake of Soviet-U.S. relations, which would only have the effect of raising Soviet hopes and increasing Soviet demands, and to ignore alternative lines of policy, which might be much more compatible with our own national and international interests.

The Soviet Government will never be easy to 'get along with.' The American people must accustom themselves to this thought, not as a cause for despair, but as a fact to be faced objectively and courageously. If we find it impossible to enlist Soviet cooperation in the solution of world problems, we should be prepared to join with the British and other Western countries in an attempt to build up a world of our own which will pursue its own objectives and will recognize the Soviet orbit as a distinct entity with which conflict is not predestined but with which we cannot pursue common aims.

As long as the Soviet Government maintains its present foreign policy, based upon the theory of an ultimate struggle between Communism and Capitalism, the United States must assume that the U.S.S.R. might fight at any time for the twofold purpose of expanding the territory under communist control and weakening its potential capitalist opponents. The Soviet Union was able to flow into the political vacuum of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Near East, Manchuria and Korea because no other nation was both willing and able to prevent it. Soviet leaders were encouraged by easy success and they are now preparing to take over new areas in the same way. The Soviet Union, as Stalin euphemistically phrased it, is preparing 'for any eventuality.'

Unless the United States is willing to sacrifice its future security for the sake of 'accord' with the U.S.S.R. now, this government must, as a first step toward world stabilization, seek to prevent additional Soviet aggression. The greater the area controlled by the Soviet Union, the greater the military requirements of this country will be. Our present military plans are based on the assumption that, for the next few years at least, Western Europe, the Middle East, China and Japan will remain outside the Soviet sphere. If the Soviet Union acquires control of one or more of these areas, the military forces required to hold in check those of the U.S.S.R. and prevent still further acquisitions will be substantially enlarged. That will also be true if any of the naval and air bases in the Atlantic and Pacific, upon which our present plans rest, are given up. This government should be prepared, while scrupulously avoiding any act which would be an excuse for the Soviets to begin a war, to resist vigorously and successfully any efforts of the U.S.S.R. to expand into areas vital to American security.

The language of military power is the only language which disciples of power politics [that is, the belief that only considerations of power—and not of morality—matter in foreign affairs] understand. The United States must use that language in order that Soviet leaders will realize that our government is determined to uphold the interests of its citizens and the rights of small nations. Compromise and concessions are considered, by the Soviets, to be evidences of weakness and they are encouraged by our 'retreats' to make new and greater demands.

The main deterrent to Soviet attack on the United States, or to attack on areas of the world which are vital to our security, will be the military power of this country. It must be made apparent to the Soviet Government that our strength will be sufficient to repel any attack and sufficient to defeat the U.S.S.R. decisively if a war should start. The prospect of defeat is the only sure means of deterring the Soviet Union....

In addition to maintaining our own strength, the United States should support and assist all democratic countries which are in any way menaced or endangered by the U.S.S.R. Providing military support in case of attack is a last resort; a more effective barrier to communism is strong economic support. Trade agreements, loans and technical missions strengthen our ties with friendly nations and are effective demonstrations that capitalism is at least the equal of communism....

There are some trouble-spots which will require diligent and considered effort on the part of the United States if Soviet penetration and eventual domination is to be prevented. In the Far East, for example, this country should continue to strive for a unified and economically stable China, a reconstructed and democratic Japan, and a unified and independent Korea....

Our best chances of influencing Soviet leaders consist in making it unmistakably clear that action contrary to our conception of a decent world order will rebound to the disadvantage of the Soviet regime whereas friendly and cooperative action will pay dividends. If this position can be maintained firmly enough and long enough, the logic of it must permeate eventually into the Soviet system....

Because the Soviet Union is a highly-centralized state, whose leaders exercise rigid discipline and control of all governmental functions, its government acts with speed, consistency, and boldness. Democratic governments are usually loosely organized, with a high degree of autonomy in government departments and agencies. Government policies at times are confused, misunderstood or disregarded by subordinate officials. The United States cannot afford to be uncertain of its policies toward the Soviet Union. There must be such effective coordination within the government that our military and civil policies concerning the U.S.S.R., her satellites, and our Allies are consistent and forceful. Any uncertainty or discrepancy will be seized immediately by the Soviets and exploited at our cost....

In conclusion, as long as the Soviet Government adheres to its present policy, the United States should maintain military forces powerful enough to restrain the Soviet Union and to confine Soviet influence to its present area. All nations not now within the Soviet sphere should be given generous economic assistance and political support in their opposition to Soviet penetration.... In order to carry out an effective policy toward the Soviet Union, the United States Government should coordinate its own activities, inform and instruct the American people about the Soviet Union, and enlist their support based upon knowledge and confidence. These actions by the United States are necessary before we shall ever be able to achieve understanding and accord with the Soviet Union on any terms other than its own.

Even though Soviet leaders profess to believe that the conflict between Capitalism and Communism is irreconcilable and must eventually be resolved by the triumph of the latter, it is our hope that they will change their minds and work out with us a fair and equitable settlement when they realize that we are too strong to be beaten and too determined to be frightened.

Excerpts from X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947:  
<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19470701faessay25403/x/the-sources-of-soviet-conduct.html>

[A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **George F. Kennan** (1904-2005) graduated from Princeton University in 1925 and soon thereafter went to work for the U.S. State Department as an expert on Russia. He spent much of the 1930s attached to the U.S. embassy in Moscow, where he witnessed firsthand the internal workings of the Soviet Union, including the show trials in which Stalin condemned thousands of suspected political opponents to death. This experience convinced Kennan that there was little hope for lasting cooperation between the Soviet Union and the West. In May 1944 he was appointed deputy chief of the U.S. mission in Moscow, where in 1946 he drafted a telegram [see previous lesson] that laid out his views on why the Soviets were behaving as they were. This telegram proved to be highly influential among many of Truman's foreign policy advisers, who encouraged him to publish an article clarifying some of his ideas. What follows is a much shortened version of that article, which appeared in the July 1947 issue of the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs*. Because the author was a prominent official in the State Department, he used a false name ("X") rather than his own.]

...[I]t is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such a policy has nothing to do with...threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward "toughness." While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means unamenable [unresponsive] to considerations of prestige. Like almost any other government, it can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield even though this might be dictated by its sense of realism. The Russian leaders are keen judges of human psychology, and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and of self-control is never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness....

It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disruption and, weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

Balanced against this are the facts that Russia, as opposed to the western world in general, is still by far the weaker party, that Soviet policy is highly flexible, and that Soviet society may well contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential. This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.

It would be an exaggeration to say that American behavior unassisted and alone could exercise a power of life and death over the Communist movement and bring about the early fall of Soviet power in Russia. But the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.

## The Strategy of Containment

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity #2: The Truman Doctrine

**Directions (Group #1):** Read the following document. When you are finished, your teacher will pair you with another student for a silent debate on whether the United States should do what Truman suggests.

Excerpts from Harry S. Truman's "Truman Doctrine" address, which he delivered to Congress on March 12, 1947:

[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/doctrine/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-03-12&documentid=31&studycollectionid=TDoctrine&pagenumber=1](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-03-12&documentid=31&studycollectionid=TDoctrine&pagenumber=1)

The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress. The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved....

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the Government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries. A commission appointed by the United Nations Security Council is at present investigating disturbed conditions in northern Greece and alleged border violations along the frontier between Greece on the one hand and Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the other.

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek Army is small and poorly equipped. It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority of the Government throughout Greek territory.

Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.

The United States must supply that assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid but these are inadequate. There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn.

No other nation is willing and able to provide the necessary support for a democratic Greek Government.

The British Government, which has been helping Greece, can give no further financial or economic aid after March. Great Britain finds itself under the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece.

We have considered how the United Nations might assist in this crisis. But the situation is an urgent one requiring immediate action, and the United Nations and its related organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required....

Greece's neighbor, Turkey, also deserves our attention.

The future of Turkey as an independent and economically sound State is clearly no less important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world than the future of Greece. The circumstances in which Turkey finds itself today are considerably different from those of Greece. Turkey has been spared the disasters that have beset Greece. And during the war, the United States and Great Britain furnished Turkey with material aid.

Nevertheless, Turkey now needs our support.

Since the war Turkey has sought financial assistance from Great Britain and the United States for the purpose of effecting that modernization necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity.

That integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East.

The British Government has informed us that, owing to its own difficulties, it can no longer extend financial or economic aid to Turkey.

As in the case of Greece, if Turkey is to have the assistance it needs, the United States must supply it. We are the only country able to provide that help.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey, and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time.

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free people to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes.

This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes....

It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

Moreover, the disappearance of Greece as an independent State would have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war. It would be an unspeakable tragedy if these countries, which have struggled so long against overwhelming odds, should lose that victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world.

Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far-reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute action.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948. In requesting these funds, I have taken into consideration the maximum amount of relief assistance which would be furnished to Greece out of the \$350,000,000 which I recently requested that the Congress authorize for the prevention of starvation and suffering in countries devastated by the war.

In addition to funds, I ask the Congress to authorize the detail of American civilian and military personnel to Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of such financial and material assistance as may be furnished.

I recommend that authority also be provided for the instruction and training of selected Greek and Turkish personnel....



This is a serious course upon which we embark. I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious.

The United States contributed \$341,000,000,000 toward winning World War II. This is an investment in world freedom and world peace. The assistance that I am recommending for Greece and Turkey amounts to little more than one-tenth of one per cent of this investment. It is only common sense that we should safeguard this investment and make sure that it was not in vain.

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events. I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

## The Strategy of Containment

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity #2: The Truman Doctrine

**Directions (Group #2):** President Truman has asked Congress to approve \$400 million in aid to the governments of Greece and Turkey. Read the following document. When you are finished, your teacher will pair you with another student for a silent debate on whether the United States should do what Truman suggests.

Henry A. Wallace, Speech on the Truman Doctrine, March 27, 1947:  
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=852>

[Henry A. Wallace (1888-1965) grew up on a farm in Iowa, and graduated from Iowa State College in 1910. In 1915 he founded a business that remains to this day one of the most profitable agricultural corporations in the United States. In 1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt named him Secretary of Agriculture, a position which Wallace held until FDR selected him as his running mate for the 1940 presidential election. As vice president he became increasingly outspoken in his liberal views, leading FDR to drop him from the ticket in 1944 in favor of Harry Truman. However, he remained in the cabinet as Secretary of Commerce, and he remained in this post until 1946, when he was asked to resign because of his public differences with President Truman over foreign policy. He would later run against Truman in the presidential election of 1948.]

March 12, 1947, marked a turning point in American history. It is not a Greek crisis that we face, it is an American crisis. It is a crisis in the American spirit.... Only the American people fully aroused and promptly acting can prevent disaster.

President Truman, in the name of democracy and humanitarianism, proposed a military lend-lease program. He proposed a loan of \$400,000,000 to Greece and Turkey as a down payment on an unlimited expenditure aimed at opposing Communist expansion. He proposed, in effect, that America police Russia's every border. There is no regime too reactionary for us provided it stands in Russia's expansionist path. There is no country too remote to serve as the scene of a contest which may widen until it becomes a world war.

President Truman calls for action to combat a crisis. What is this crisis that necessitates Truman going to Capitol Hill as though a Pearl Harbor has suddenly hit us? How many more of these Pearl Harbors will there be? How can they be foreseen? What will they cost? [ ... ]

One year ago at Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill called for a diplomatic offensive against Soviet Russia. By sanctioning that speech, Truman committed us to a policy of combating Russia with British sources. That policy proved to be so bankrupt that Britain can no longer maintain it. Now President Truman proposes we take over Britain's hopeless task. Today Americans are asked to support the

Governments of Greece and Turkey. Tomorrow we shall be asked to support the Governments of China and Argentina.

I say that this policy is utterly futile. No people can be bought. America cannot afford to spend billions and billions of dollars for unproductive purposes. The world is hungry and insecure, and the peoples of all lands demand change. President Truman cannot prevent change in the world any more than he can prevent the tide from coming in or the sun from setting. But once America stands for opposition to change, we are lost. America will become the most hated nation in the world.

Russia may be poor and unprepared for war, but she knows very well how to reply to Truman's declaration of economic and financial pressure. All over the world Russia and her ally, poverty, will increase the pressure against us. Who among us is ready to predict that in this struggle American dollars will outlast the grievances that lead to communism? I certainly don't want to see communism spread. I predict that Truman's policy will spread communism in Europe and Asia. You can't fight something with nothing. When Truman offers unconditional aid to King George of Greece, he is acting as the best salesman communism ever had. In proposing this reckless adventure, Truman is betraying the great tradition of America and the leadership of the great American who preceded him....

When President Truman proclaims the world-wide conflict between East and West, he is telling the Soviet leaders that we are preparing for eventual war. They will reply by measures to strengthen their position in the event of war. Then the task of keeping the world at peace will pass beyond the power of the common people everywhere who want peace. Certainly it will not be freedom that will be victorious in this struggle. Psychological and spiritual preparation for war will follow financial preparation; civil liberties will be restricted; standards of living will be forced downward; families will be divided against each other; none of the values that we hold worth fighting for will be secure....

This is the time for an all-out worldwide reconstruction program for peace. This is America's opportunity. The peoples of all lands say to America: Send us plows for our fields instead of tanks and guns to be used against us .... The dollars that are spent will be spent for the production of goods and will come back to us in a thousand different ways. Our programs will be based on service instead of the outworn ideas of imperialism and power politics. It is a fundamental law of life that a strong idea is merely strengthened by persecution. The way to handle communism is by what William James called the replacing power of the higher affection. In other words, we give the common man all over the world something better than communism. I believe we have something better than communism here in America. But President Truman has not spoken for the American ideal. It is now the turn of the American people to speak.

Common sense is required of all of us in realizing that helping militarism never brings peace. Courage is required of all of us in carrying out a program that can bring peace. Courage and common sense are the qualities that made America great. Let's keep those qualities now.

# The Strategy of Containment

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity #2: The Truman Doctrine

**Directions:** With your partner, you must debate the following question, without talking. Every statement must begin with “Yeah, but.” Both of you will be given a position to debate prior to class. You have twenty minutes to work with your partner, after which there will be a class discussion. Using the information that you learned in this unit, debate the following statement (You may need to continue onto separate paper):

“Should the United States send military aid to Greece and Turkey?”

Yeah,

Yeah, but...

Yeah, but...

Yeah, but...

Yeah, but...

Yeah, but...

Yeah, but...

Yeah, but...

## The Strategy of Containment

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### Activity #3: The Marshall Plan

**Directions:** Read the following documents and political cartoons. When you have finished, write a three-paragraph letter to President Truman in which you express either your support or your opposition to the Marshall Plan.

Document #1: From Speech by George C. Marshall, June 15, 1947:

[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/marshall/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-06-15&documentid=0&studycollectionid=mp&pagenumber=1](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-06-15&documentid=0&studycollectionid=mp&pagenumber=1) [Secretary of State George Marshall gave this speech to the graduating class of 1947 at Harvard University. Because this was the first public mention of the proposed aid program, the press quickly dubbed it the “Marshall Plan.”]

I need not tell you gentlemen that the world situation is very serious. That must be apparent to all intelligent people. I think one difficulty is that the problem is one of such enormous complexity that the very mass of facts presented to the public by press and radio make it exceedingly difficult for the man in the street to reach a clear appraisal of the situation. Furthermore, the people of this country are distant from the troubled areas of the earth and it is hard for them to comprehend the plight and consequent reactions of the long-suffering peoples, and the effect of those reactions on their governments in connection with our efforts to promote peace in the world.

In considering the requirements for the rehabilitation of Europe, the physical loss of life, the visible destruction of cities, factories, mines, and railroads was correctly estimated, but it has become obvious during recent months that this visible destruction was probably less serious than the dislocation of the entire fabric of European economy. For the past 10 years conditions have been highly abnormal. The feverish preparation for war and the more feverish maintenance of the war effort engulfed all aspects of national economies. Machinery has fallen into disrepair or is entirely obsolete. Under the arbitrary and destructive Nazi rule, virtually every possible enterprise was geared into the German war machine. Long-standing commercial ties, private institutions, banks, insurance companies, and shipping companies disappeared, through loss of capital, absorption through nationalization, or by simple destruction. In many countries, confidence in the local currency has been severely shaken. The breakdown of the business structure of Europe during the war was complete. Recovery has been seriously retarded by the fact that two years after the close of hostilities a peace settlement with Germany and Austria has not been agreed upon. But even given a more prompt solution of these difficult problems, the rehabilitation of the economic structure of Europe quite evidently will require a much longer time and greater effort than had been foreseen....

The truth of the matter is that Europe's requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products—principally from America—are so much greater than her present ability to pay

that she must have substantial additional help or face economic, social, and political deterioration of a very grave character.

The remedy lies in breaking the vicious circle and restoring the confidence of the European people in the economic future of their own countries and of Europe as a whole. The manufacturer and the farmer throughout wide areas must be able and willing to exchange their products for currencies the continuing value of which is not open to question.

Aside from the demoralizing effect on the world at large and the possibilities of disturbances arising as a result of the desperation of the people concerned, the consequences to the economy of the United States should be apparent to all. It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop. Any assistance that this Government may render in the future should provide a cure rather than a mere palliative. Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation, I am sure, on the part of the United States Government. Any government which maneuvers to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us. Furthermore, governments, political parties, or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States.

It is already evident that, before the United States Government can proceed much further in its efforts to alleviate the situation and help start the European world on its way to recovery, there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be undertaken by this Government. It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this Government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical for us to do so. The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all, European nations.

An essential part of any successful action on the part of the United States is an understanding on the part of the people of America of the character of the problem and the remedies to be applied. Political passion and prejudice should have no part. With foresight, and a willingness on the part of our people to face up to the vast responsibility which history has clearly placed upon our country, the difficulties I have outlined can and will be overcome.

Rep. Charles W. Vursell, Speech on the Marshall Plan, December 4, 1947:

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=855> [Many of Truman's opponents in Congress were quick to criticize the Marshall Plan. One of them was Republican Charles Vursell of Illinois, who made this speech before Congress in December.]

...This Congress is faced with grave decisions. We are being asked to take from the American people in money and supplies at a critical time of shortages on every hand, \$597,000,000 for immediate emergency relief. Later we are being asked by the administration to enter into a 4-year contract to

furnish some \$20,000,000,000 or more in money and supplies to implement the Marshall plan. In the interest of our own people and Nation, we must not approach them in an atmosphere of hysteria and emotion; we must think as realists...

...[B]y holding up the false specter of starvation, the administration and the thousands of bureau propagandists and friendly commentators, over the air, seek to influence the American people and the Congress by the biggest barrage of propaganda ever turned loose on the public, to support the \$20,000,000,000 Marshall plan... .

...[T]hose who favor the Marshall plan will tell you that we must rebuild western Europe to stop communism. We all want to retard or stop communism if we can, but we must be honest with ourselves and honest with the American people we represent. We cannot stop communism taking Western Europe unless we have the power to stop Russia and her armies. We held a serious conference with a group of high-ranking military men while in Europe whose duty it is to know what Russia can and may do. We asked the question as follows: "Suppose, under the Marshall plan or some other plan, we spend from \$10,000,000,000 to \$20,000,000,000 rebuilding western Europe and get those countries going in good shape in 4 or 5 years, is there anything then to stop Russia from moving in and taking a much richer prize after we have spent our money to build it up?" The answer was "No." I do not believe any top military man in the Nation will make the statement that we can land and maintain in western Europe sufficient military forces to prevent Russia, if she so desires, from taking over western Europe. Germany will have no army. Italy, France, Belgium and Holland will have no military strength capable of putting up any serious resistance if Russia should make such a move. You just as well quit trying to deceive the American people by telling them you can stop communism if you put over the Marshall plan...

...Now, if you want to exert the strongest influence possible by the United States to retard, or stop the encroachment of communism on western Europe, take some of these \$20,000,000,000 that you would waste in the Marshall plan, and spend them here at home in building the strongest air force with the greatest striking power of any air force in the world. Give more attention to cooperation in hemispheric defense with South America, strengthen our military departments where necessary to enable us in any emergency to strike promptly with power and effect. Mr. Stalin and his warlords, if they knew we were making such moves, would probably hesitate to move further into Western Europe for fear they might precipitate a war with a powerful Nation that is prepared.

I would rather risk this course for the long pull future, and for the immediate effect it would have on Russia, than to tempt them by setting before them a \$20,000,000,000 banquet table through the Marshall plan of rebuilding Western Europe. Force is the only thing Russia understands.

[I]f we weaken ourselves by shipping away our resources, causing the cost of living to go higher and higher, and spending our Nation into bankruptcy, such action will bring smiles and great satisfaction to Stalin, [Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav] Molotov, and Russia. Twenty billion dollars spent on our part in Western Europe now, plus the efforts of the European nations should be worth \$50,000,000,000 in a few years. It is too great a temptation to place before the Russian warlords...

The first responsibility of the Members of this Congress is to protect the interests of our own people and preserve the financial solvency of our own Nation. The greatest contribution we can make for the future peace of the world is to keep America strong.

Document #3: Political Cartoon, “It’s the Same Thing, Without the Mechanical Problems”:  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/herblock/images/s03386u.jpg>

Document #4: Political Cartoon, “While the Shadow Lengthens”:  
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/marshall/images/bearwtext.jpg>

Dear President Truman: